

CHAPTER 3

SURVEY RESULTS



Reclamation facilities must be operated in a manner that minimizes environmental damage, including harm to fish populations.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

This section describes the overall results of the survey from a Reclamationwide perspective. Figures that illustrate the results of every closed-ended question are presented in this section. The responses to the open-ended questions are summarized here and presented in complete form in appendix D.

Variances by region and customer type are noted in this section when appropriate and are presented in full in appendices E through M. Regional data are presented in appendices E through I, and customer type (for the four primary groups — water, power, environment, and recreation) data are presented in appendices H through M. Generally, Argonne found that the results did not vary significantly among regions (i.e., Mid Pacific results were similar to Lower Colorado). The results were also remarkably consistent among customer types. Customers that indicated environment was the primary service they received had very similar impressions of Reclamation's customer service as those customers that indicated power was the primary service they received.

For the most part, this section follows the survey format and presents results chronologically by section and question numbers. Although the questions regarding customer demographics were asked at the end of the survey (Section 5: Information About You), the demographic information is presented here to provide a framework for the type of customers that responded to the survey.

3.1 SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

An alert letter was mailed to the 3,011 customers (included in the survey sample) on June 3, 1998. The purpose was to make customers aware of the survey's goals and importance and to encourage their participation. The survey was mailed to the customers over 3 days — June 5, 8, and 9, 1998. According to OMB regulations and authorization, customers had a 30-day period to complete and return the surveys to Argonne. A follow-up postcard was mailed to the survey sample on June 22, 1998, reminding customers to send in their completed surveys. Approximately 100 phone calls were received from the survey respondents. The time for receiving the surveys was extended by 12 days to compensate for postal delays. A total of 835 customers responded to the survey, representing an overall response rate of 30% (Figure 3.1).

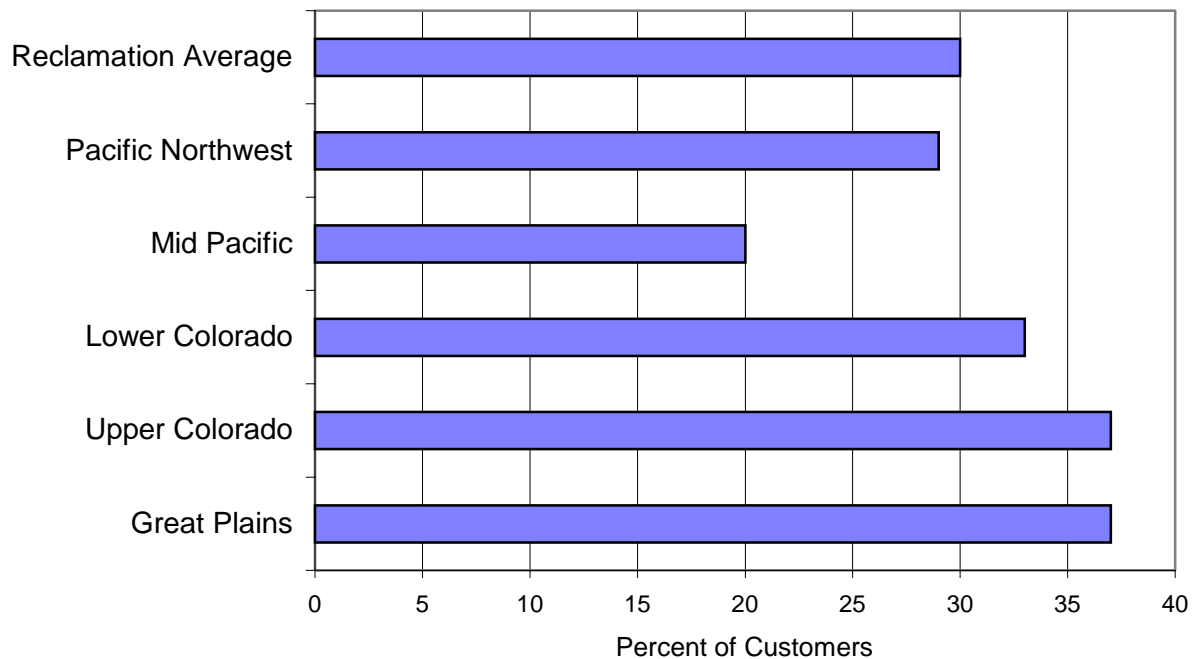


FIGURE 3.1 Percentages of Reclamation Customers that Responded to the Customer Satisfaction Survey by Region

Although the customer mailing lists had been exhaustively fine-tuned, 245 surveys were still returned as undeliverable. The most common reasons were because the addressee was not known at the address or the forwarding order had expired. The sample size was adjusted to account for the undelivered surveys. Table 3.1 breaks down the adjusted sample size and response rate by region.

TABLE 3.1 Sample Size and Response Rate by Region

Region	No. of Samples	No. Undelivered	Adjusted Sample Size	No. of Surveys Received	Response Rate (%)
Pacific Northwest	640	89	551	159	29
Mid Pacific	871	27	844	170	20
Lower Colorado	300	28	272	90	33
Upper Colorado	741	59	682	249	37
Great Plains	459	31	428	157	37
Unknown region ^a	—	—	—	10	—
TOTALS	3,011	234	2,777	835	30

^aThe survey booklets were color-coded by region to track regional variations in the response rate and provide for a more comprehensive analysis of the data. However, some responses had been photocopied, so it was not possible to determine the originating region.

The expected response rate for any self-administered mail survey varies significantly (depending on the source); it ranges from 10% to 50% or more. This variance is contributable to many factors, such as the type of organization conducting the survey, the survey's length, its level of readability, the type of population surveyed (general versus specific), the degree of topical salience to the potential respondent, whether prenotification about the survey was provided, follow-up activities, and incentives. Response rates for other types of surveys are much higher than those for mail surveys. Response rates for interview, focus group, and telephone surveys can range from 50% to even 100%, depending on the design method. Costs and benefits are associated with each method. The data collection needs of the study must be considered with respect to resource requirements.

Mail surveys allow information to be gathered from a wide, diverse population at relatively less cost than other methods. When one considers the costs associated with interviewing 3,011 customers as opposed to obtaining their opinions by mail, the choice becomes apparent. However, it is also important to understand the limitations of this method.

The biggest cost associated with conducting a mail survey is “nonresponses.” Nonresponses may introduce bias error into the survey results because those that choose to respond to the survey may be motivated to do so because of common interests, while those that choose not to respond may also have common traits that are different from the respondents. Therefore, the respondents may not accurately reflect the entire population. The overall response rate to Reclamation’s survey was 30%; the rate ranged from 20% to 37% among the regions. Argonne had surveyed Reclamation’s power customers two years before this study and got a response rate of 35%. Therefore, Argonne expected a response rate of approximately 30% for the Customer Satisfaction Survey. Thirty percent is considered a typical response rate for this type of survey instrument and would be sufficient for obtaining recommendations for improvements.

Another type of nonresponse can also introduce bias: item nonresponse, which occurs when a respondent does not complete all items on the survey form. This type of bias occurs when the respondent does not know the answers to certain questions or refuses to answer them because he/she feels they are sensitive, embarrassing, difficult, or irrelevant. The response rate by question (defined as the percentage of respondents who answered a specific question or item within a question) varied significantly for this survey, ranging from approximately 5% to 98%. The average response rate for the entire survey, including both closed- and open-ended questions was 63%. The response rate for the closed-ended questions was more than twice the response rate for the open-ended questions (67% versus 28%, respectively). Typically, open-ended questions yield a lower response rate, which reflects the level of difficulty experienced by respondents in developing and defining answers. The response rate for closed-ended questions is higher for items that are easier to answer and more relevant to respondents. An analysis of potential nonresponse bias is presented in Section 3.2.3.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

3.2.1 Question 5.1 — Please ✓ the category that best describes your affiliation.

Respondents were given nine choices of organizational affiliations from which to choose and a place for specifying an affiliation if it was not listed (Figure 3.2). The nine affiliations respondents could choose were: (1) federal government, (2) state government, (3) local government, (4) nonprofit organization, (5) private business, (6) Native American nation/group, (7) water-based organization, (8) power-based organization, and (9) individual. Nearly one-quarter of the respondents chose more than a single category, creating 41 additional “multiple categories.” Three examples of multiple categories were: (1) nonprofit organization AND water-based organization, (2) local government AND water-based organization, and (3) power-based organization AND water-based organization. When respondents checked multiple categories, their responses were attributed to both categories (i.e., double counted). Therefore, percentages shown in Figure 3.2 do not add to 100%.

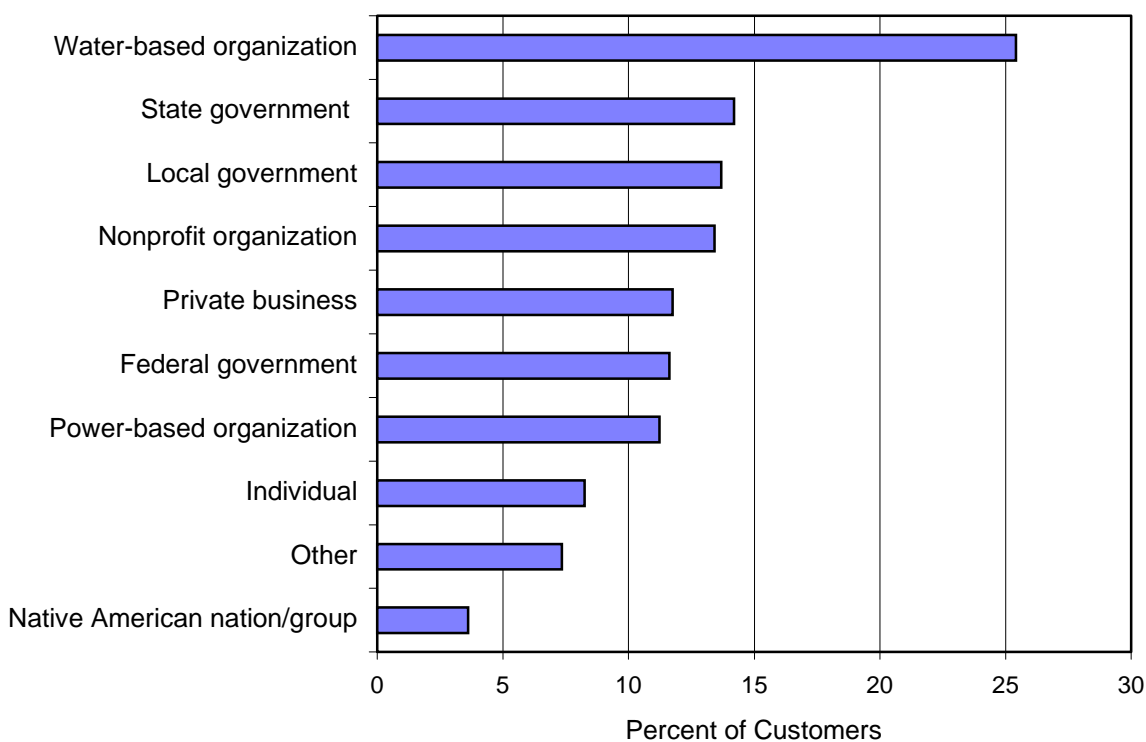


FIGURE 3.2 Percentage of Respondents Affiliated with Various Organizations

Twenty-five percent of the respondents were affiliated with water-based organizations. Three other categories nearly tied for second place, each representing approximately a 14% response rate: state government, local government, and nonprofit organization. The 7% of respondents that checked “other” identified their affiliation as farmer, university, irrigation district, special district, or utility.

The response rate for Upper Colorado and the Great Plains regions varied from the overall response rate (Figure 3.3). Thirty-seven percent of the Upper Colorado respondents identified themselves as affiliated with water-based organizations, a figure that was 12 percentage points higher than Reclamation’s overall response rate. Thus, the Upper Colorado region had a stronger water focus (in this survey) than did the other regions. Both the Great Plains and Mid Pacific regions identified themselves as being affiliated with water-based organizations at levels 9 and 8 percentage points lower, respectively, than the Reclamation average. Conversely, the Great Plains focus was power. Thirty-three percent of the Great Plains respondents identified themselves as being affiliated with power-based organizations, which was 22 percentage points higher than the overall Reclamation average. The

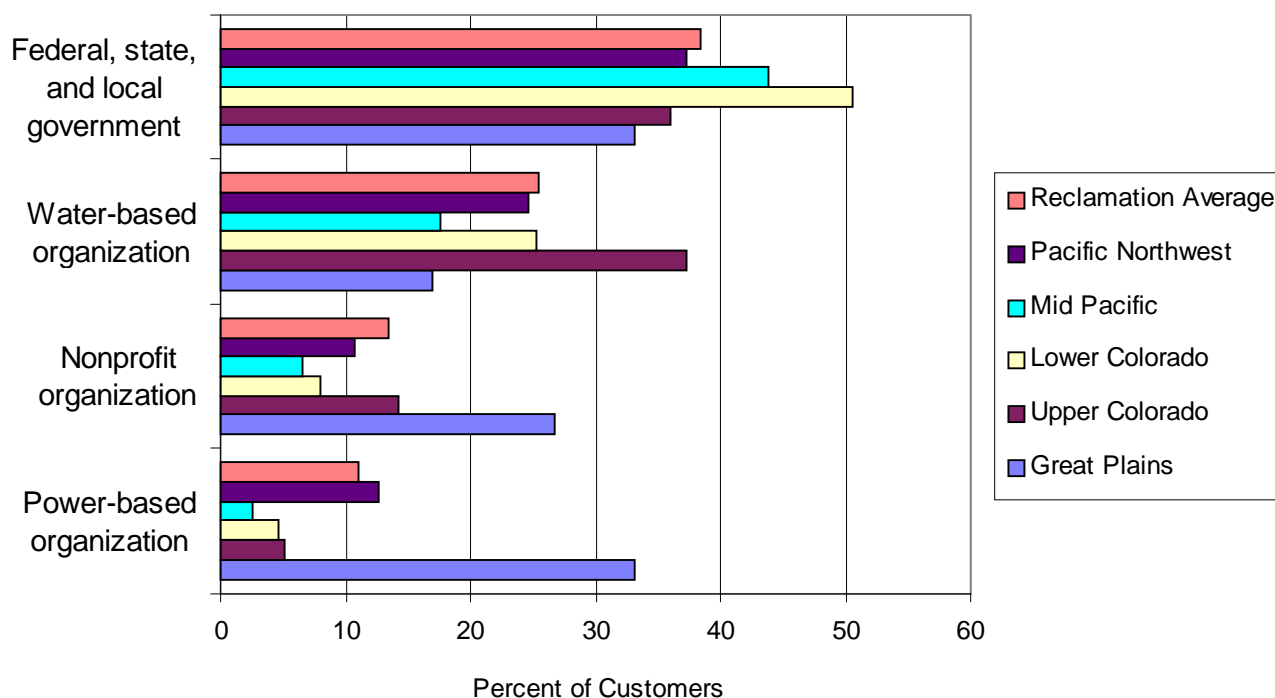


FIGURE 3.3 Respondent Type Variation by Region

Upper Colorado, Lower Colorado, and Mid Pacific regions identified themselves as being affiliated with power-based organization at levels 6, 7, and 9 percentage points lower ‘respectively,’ than Reclamation’s average. Another characteristic of the Great Plains region was that it had the largest percentage (27%) of nonprofit organizations, and it was higher than Reclamation’s average in this attribute by 13 percentage points. The Lower Colorado and Mid Pacific regions identified themselves as being affiliated with nonprofit organizations at levels 5 and 7 percentage points lower than Reclamation’s average. More than 50% of the respondents from the Lower Colorado region identified themselves as being affiliated with the federal, state, or local government; that percentage was higher than Reclamation’s average by 12 percentage points. The Great Plains and Mid Pacific regions identified themselves as being affiliated with governmental bodies at levels 5 percentage points (each) higher than the Reclamation average.

3.2.2 Question 5.2 — Please ✓ the program area that best describes the primary service you receive from the Bureau of Reclamation.

Respondents were given six choices of services that Reclamation provides and a place to identify other services that they receive. The six choices included (1) agricultural water, (2) cultural resources, (3) environment, (4) municipal/industrial water, (5) power, and (6) recreation. Categories were not defined in the survey. Survey responses, therefore, rely on the respondent’s interpretations of these categories. However, it is believed that the respondents were familiar with Reclamation’s mission areas as they relate to services and understood the category meanings. Again, nearly a quarter of the respondents chose more than a single category, creating 38 additional multiple categories.² Three examples of multiple categories included: (1) agricultural water AND power, (2) cultural resources AND environment, and (3) agricultural water AND municipal/industrial water.

²Figures for all multiple category responses representing the number of boxes checked by respondents rather than the number of customers responding to avoid misrepresenting of the data. For example, if only one customer checked two boxes, it would be incorrect to say that half of the customers identified themselves as X and the other half identified themselves as Y. Therefore, for any question to which respondents checked multiple boxes, the figures will not add to 100% because the analysis reflects the number of boxes checked rather than the number of respondents who checked boxes.

Forty-eight percent of respondents identified agricultural water as the primary service they receive from Reclamation (Figure 3.4). Power and environment tied for second place, each receiving a 17% response. The 15% of respondents that checked other identified their primary service as technical support, oversight, funding, information/data, or various aspects of water related services other than agriculture or M&I; some of these respondents noted that they did not know what primary service they received or that they believed they did not receive a service from Reclamation.

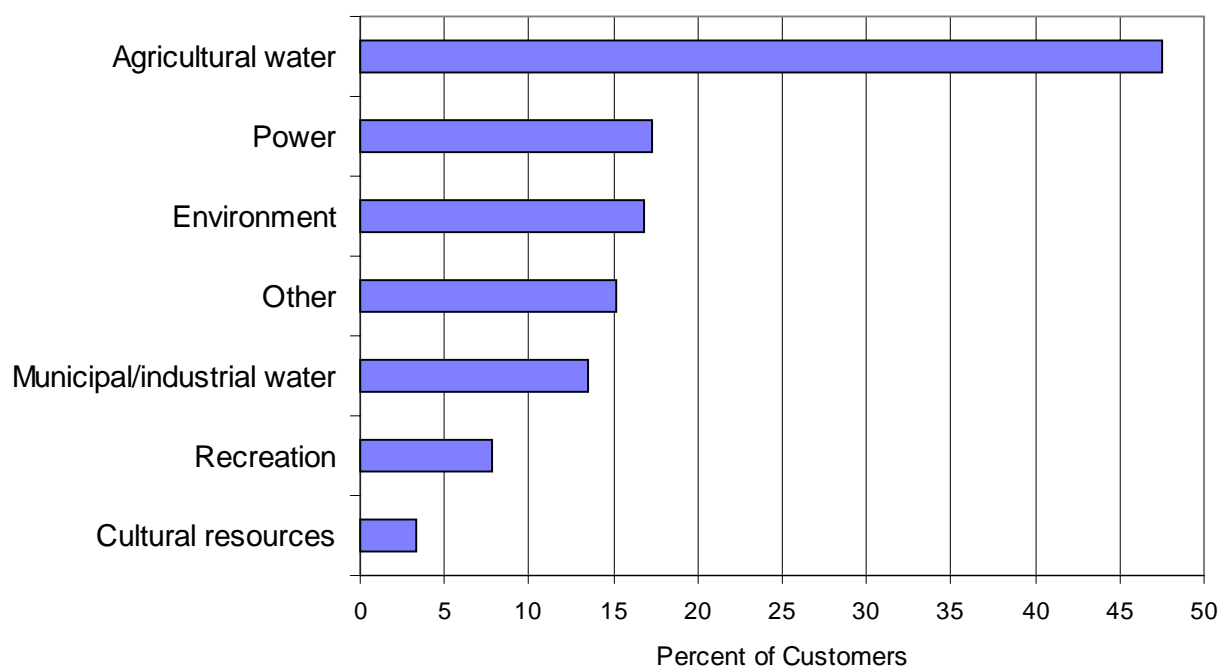


FIGURE 3.4 Primary Services Received by Survey Respondents

Responses for Upper Colorado, Pacific Northwest, and Great Plains regions varied from the overall response (Figure 3.5). Sixty percent of the Upper Colorado and Pacific Northwest customers identified agricultural water as the primary service they receive from Reclamation, which was 12 percentage points higher than Reclamation's overall response. This information about Upper Colorado is consistent with the affiliation response to Question 5.1: Upper Colorado is a water-based region (in this survey). Only 1% of the Pacific Northwest customers identified municipal/industrial water as the primary service they receive from Reclamation, which was 12 percentage points lower than

Reclamation's overall response. More than 40% of the Great Plains customers identified power as the primary service they receive from Reclamation, which was 25 percentage points higher than Reclamation's overall response. Again, this information shows that the respondents from the Great Plains region (in this survey) were more concerned about power issues.

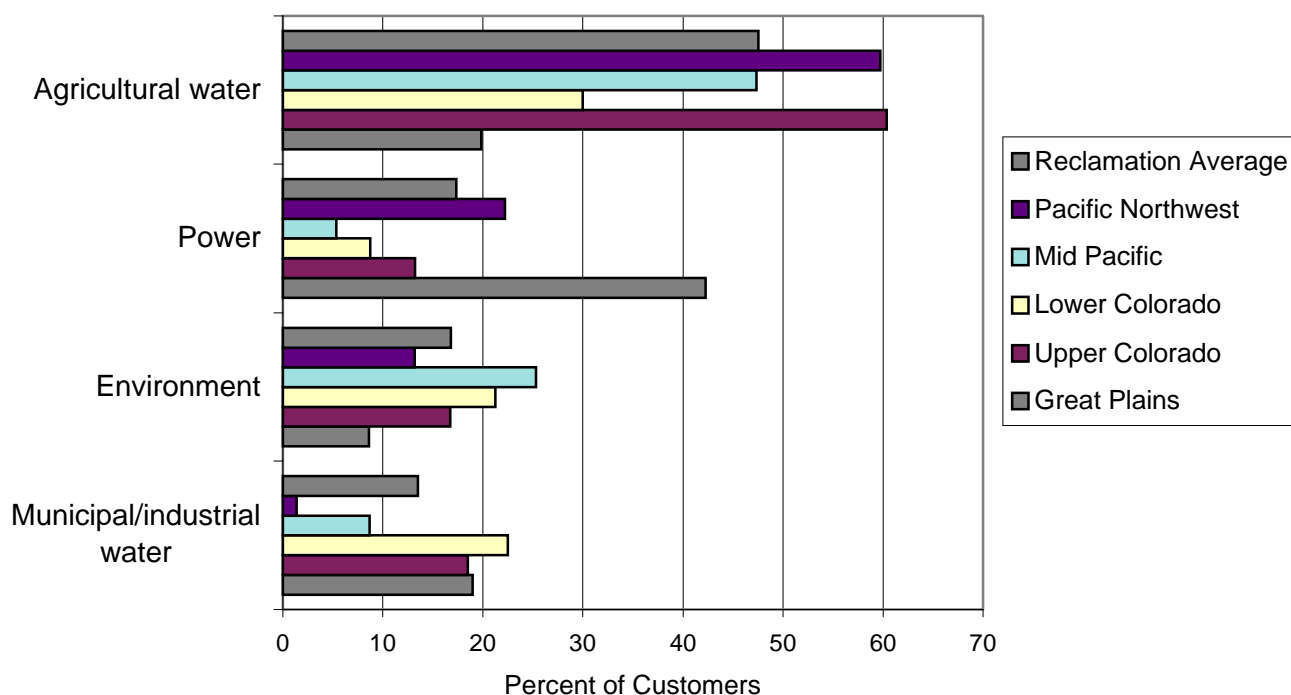


FIGURE 3.5 Primary Services Received from Reclamation by Respondents by Region

3.2.3 Analysis of Reclamation's Customers

Argonne assessed respondents' answers about primary services received (Figure 3.5) against the general delivery of services by the agency as a whole and variations in each region to determine whether the respondents were representative of Reclamation's customer base. The top four responses — agricultural water, power, environment, and municipal/industrial water services — were considered in this analysis. The intent was to evaluate potential nonresponse bias by determining if the mix of respondents was what might be expected, given the perceived variation of customers within each of the regions.

Agricultural water was identified by the most customers as being the primary service they received from Reclamation. Reclamationwide, approximately 48% of the respondents indicated that agricultural water was the primary service they received. The Pacific Northwest and Upper Colorado regions had a higher number of respondents, approximately 60%, indicating agricultural water as their primary service. These numbers could be attributed to the dominance of large agricultural water projects in these regions — namely, the Columbia Basin Project, near Spokane, Washington, and the Central Utah and Colorado River Storage Projects in the Upper Colorado River basin. In the Lower Colorado region, only 30% of the respondents indicated agricultural water as being the primary service, a seemingly low percentage given the amount of agricultural water used in the Boulder Canyon, Welton-Mohawk, Salt River, and Central Arizona Projects. However, the Lower Colorado region had the highest response rate with respect to municipal/industrial (M&I) water, indicative of significant M&I projects in this region, including the Southern Nevada Water Project, Central Arizona Project, Parker-Davis Project, the Colorado River aqueduct (which supply southern California cities), and the M&I component of the Salt River Project. Overall, the number of respondents that identified agricultural and M&I water uses as the primary services received seemed appropriate. It is not clear why only 20% of the Great Plains respondents indicated agricultural water was their primary service, considering a significant part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin Project is dedicated to agricultural development. However, discussions with the Great Plains Region's representative at the August 12, 1998 meeting of the Customer Service Team indicated that this sort of anomaly is expected given the types of customers served in this region (i.e., a greater proportion of power customers and fewer water customers).

About 18% of the respondents agencywide identified their primary service as electric power. The percentage of respondents in the Pacific Northwest and Upper Colorado regions was approximately the same. It is not clear why the Mid Pacific and Lower Colorado regions had lower percentage responses from power interests: 5% and 9%, respectively. It may be because the customers there have an indirect relationship with Reclamation because the U.S. Department of Energy,

through the Western Area Power Administration, is the selling agent for Reclamation power. Another explanation may be that the customers receiving project power may view water as the primary service they receive. Conversely, in the Great Plains region, there was significant representation from the power community — 42% of respondents. While these numbers are inconsistent with the rest of the agency, again, representatives at the August 12, 1998 Customer Service Team meeting agreed that the Great Plains region does have proportionately more power customers than other regions.

In assessing the environment component of service provided by Reclamation, it is important to remember that OMB required stakeholders to be removed from the survey's master customer list. It is likely that significant numbers of stakeholders would have indicated environment as being the primary service provided by Reclamation. Seventeen percent of respondents agencywide listed environment as the primary service they received. Most of the Regions had similar numbers, with Mid Pacific (25%) and Great Plains (9%) representing the greatest deviations from Reclamation's average. Twenty-one percent of the Lower Colorado regions identified environment as the primary service received, a higher proportion than the agency average. Higher proportionate numbers of respondents identifying environment in the Mid Pacific region may be explained by the heightened level of environmental awareness and regulation in California. Respondents in the Lower Colorado region may have been aware of previous environmentally sensitive projects, particularly the Central Arizona Project, which may explain the higher than average percentage of respondents who indicated environment as their primary service. It is not clear why the Great Plains Region appears to be underrepresented in this attribute. Overall, the percentages of those indicating environment as the primary service appear representative of what might be expected from Reclamation's customer population.

Customers indicating municipal/industrial water as their primary service represented 14% of the respondents agencywide. The Mid Pacific (9%), Upper Colorado (18%), and Great Plains (19%) regions were within a few percentage points of that figure. As indicated previously, the higher percentages for the the Lower Colorado region (22%) may be attributed to the number of projects

there having a large M&I component. The Pacific Northwest region (1%) seems to be significantly underrepresented in this attribute, and it is not clear why.

In summary, the primary services identified by customers in the various regions, as well as in Reclamation as a whole, could generally be explained by projects and past activities within the region. Although some responses could not be rationalized in this manner, some (e.g., the 20% agricultural water response in the Great Plain) were nevertheless generally consistent with the expectations of the Customer Service Team member from that region. The only response that was not consistent with what would be expected either by an exam of past projects and activities in the region or by the Customer Service Team is the 1% M&I water response in the Pacific Northwest. Additional communication with customers in this region would be necessary to fully resolve this apparent anomaly. However, responses to the survey in general did not differ significantly among customer types. The results show remarkable consistency among customer groups in addressing both the positive and negative aspects of Reclamation's customer service.

3.3 SURVEY RESULTS

The remainder of this section presents results from the four main sections of the Customer Satisfaction Survey: Section 1: Doing Business with the Bureau of Reclamation; Section 2: Assessing the Bureau of Reclamation's Staff; Section 3: Evaluating the Bureau of Reclamation's Performance; and Section 4: Your Ideas. First, each section's questions are presented with a description indicating what the respondents were asked to do and their options for responding.

As noted earlier, the survey consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. In the discussion of survey responses to closed-ended questions, the overall Reclamation response (i.e., from all respondents regardless of location or customer type) is presented first. If the responses among the regions or customer types are significantly different from Reclamation's overall, these differences are identified and, in most cases, correlated with other observations or characteristics of the particular group

of respondents. In this analysis, “significance” was generally defined as plus or minus five percentage points from Reclamation’s average. Some exceptions were made, however. For example, if responses from a region or group were consistently higher or lower than the Reclamation average for a given question having multiple performance measures, these findings were deemed significant, even if the differences were less than five percentage points.

Although the responses for the open-ended questions are compiled in the appendices on a regional basis, they are summarized and discussed below on a Reclamationwide basis. This was done because many of the responses pertain to Reclamationwide policies and practices and because there was a great deal of similarity among regional responses. Therefore, the results were analyzed and presented on a Reclamationwide basis. On the other hand, the responses in the appendix have been compiled on a regional basis so Reclamation representatives can examine comments that pertain to specific projects or offices within their own regions.

All additional and supporting data not included in Section 3 are in the appendices, including both figures for closed-ended responses and complete texts of the open-ended responses. Table 3.2 identifies areas of additional information and the appendix where it can be found.

TABLE 3.2 Additional Information and Appendix Where it is Described

Area of Additional Information	Appendix
Open-ended responses, overall	D
Pacific Northwest	E
Mid Pacific	F
Lower Colorado	G
Upper Colorado	H
Great Plains	I
Water customers	J
Environmental customers	K
Power customers	L
Recreation customers	M

3.3.1 Section 1: Doing Business with the Bureau of Reclamation

3.3.1.1 Question 1.1 — During the past 12 months, in doing business with the Bureau of Reclamation, please circle your level of agreement with the following statements...

Respondents were asked to evaluate seven statements about doing business with Reclamation. The seven statements were: (1) provides easy access to the people I need to contact, (2) answers my needs with a single point-of-contact, (3) provides accurate information, (4) provides consistent information, (5) is committed to understanding my needs, (6) uses plain language, and (7) values my relationship as a customer. A six-point Likert scale was used to categorize responses as always, often, sometimes, rarely, never, or don't know. Overall, customers positively assessed their interactions with Reclamation (Figure 3.6).

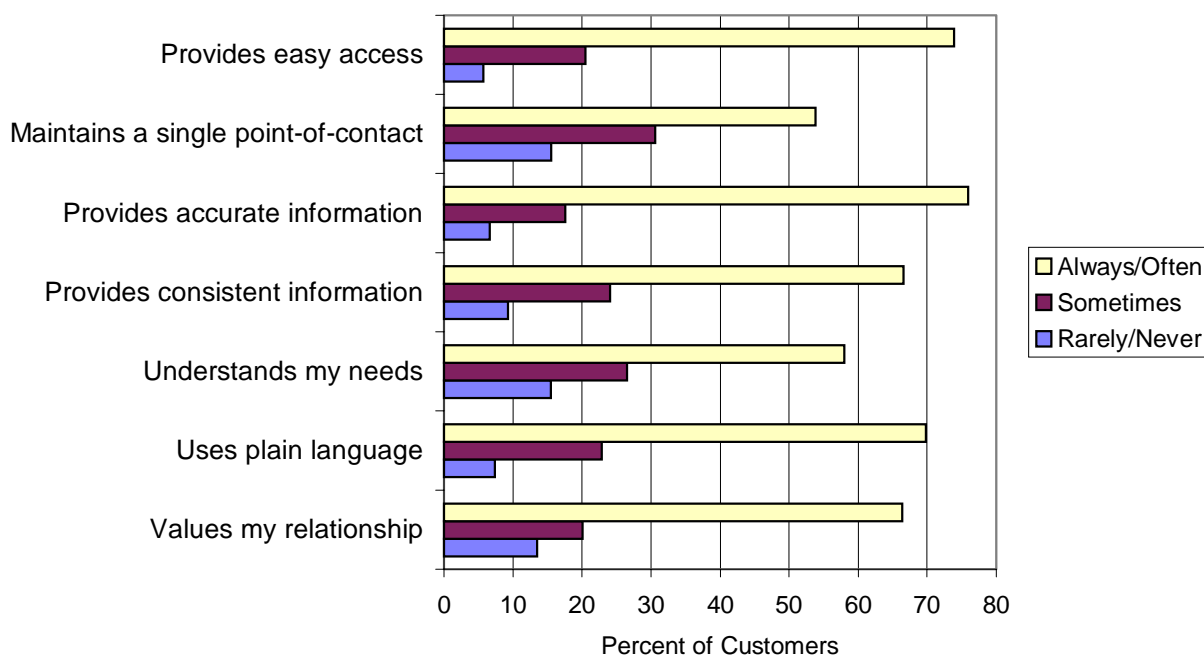


FIGURE 3.6 Customer Assessments of How Reclamation Interacts with Them

More than 65% of the customers indicated that Reclamation always or often provides accurate information, provides easy access to the person they need to contact, uses plain language, provides consistent information, and values their relationship. Fewer, although still a majority, indicated that Reclamation always or often maintains a single point of contact (54%) and understands their needs (58%).

An examination of the responses to this question from each of the regions (Appendices E through I) shows that the responses from the Lower Colorado region were consistently more positive than the Reclamationwide responses. For the seven performance measures considered, the Lower Colorado response rates for always or often were from 5 to 11 percentage points higher than the Reclamationwide response rates. The always or often response rates from Mid Pacific were consistently 5 to 10 percentage points lower than the Reclamationwide response rates for this question. The sometimes, or never, or rarely response rates were therefore also different in these regions.

Although it is difficult to say with certainty why the customers responded in this way, it is noteworthy that, as seen in the responses to Questions 1.2a and 1.2b, customers in the Lower Colorado region reported that they contact and receive information from Reclamation with noticeably greater frequency than do customers in any other region. Perhaps this higher level of communication between the Lower Colorado region and its customers led to the higher evaluations noted here.

The only other significant differences in regional responses when compared with the Reclamationwide average occurred in the Great Plains region where the responses rates were:

- 12% for rarely or never and a 14% for sometimes “provides easy access,” compared with the Reclamationwide values of 6% and 20%, respectively, and
- 12% for sometimes “provides consistent information,” compared to the Reclamationwide value of 24%.

3.3.1.2 Question 1.2a and 1.2b — During the past 12 months, how frequently, on average, did you contact and/or receive information from the Bureau of Reclamation?

This two-part question was asked to establish the direction and frequency of contact between Reclamation and its customers. Respondents were asked to give two responses — how frequently did they contact Reclamation and how frequently did they receive information. Overall, Reclamation was found to interact with 65% of its customers at least quarterly.

I contacted the Bureau of Reclamation. Customers were asked to indicate the frequency (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, or never) with which they had contacted Reclamation during the past 12 months. More than 65% of the customers had contacted Reclamation at least quarterly (Figure 3.7).

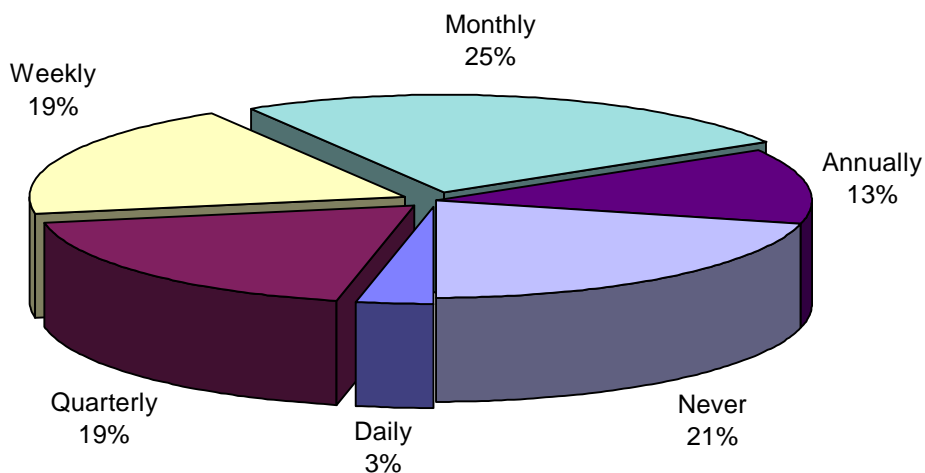


FIGURE 3.7 Frequency at Which Customers Contacted Reclamation

The primary variation in regional response to this question occurred in the Great Plains, where only 45% of the customers had contacted Reclamation on at least a quarterly basis and another 45% had not contacted Reclamation at all during the past 12 months. The reason may be because Great Plains has more power customers and that the primary contact for power sales is the PMA and not Reclamation. It is also not surprising that when the Reclamationwide responses are broken down by customer type, nearly 60% of the power customers did not contact Reclamation. Again, the reason may be that their primary contact is one of the two PMAs and not Reclamation itself.

One other interesting deviation involves Reclamation's environmental customers. Nearly 75% of the environmental customers had not contacted Reclamation during the past 12 months. That figure is 56 percentage points higher than Reclamation's overall response of 21%.

Also, 80% of the customers in the Lower Colorado region and 75% in Upper Colorado had contacted Reclamation on at least a quarterly basis, compared to the Reclamationwide average of 66%. As discussed earlier, this higher frequency of communication may contribute to the higher than average positive responses to Question 1.1 that were noted for Lower Colorado.

I received information from the Bureau of Reclamation. Customers were asked to indicate how often (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, or never) they had received information from Reclamation during the past 12 months. More than 70% of the customers had received information from Reclamation at least quarterly (Figure 3.8).

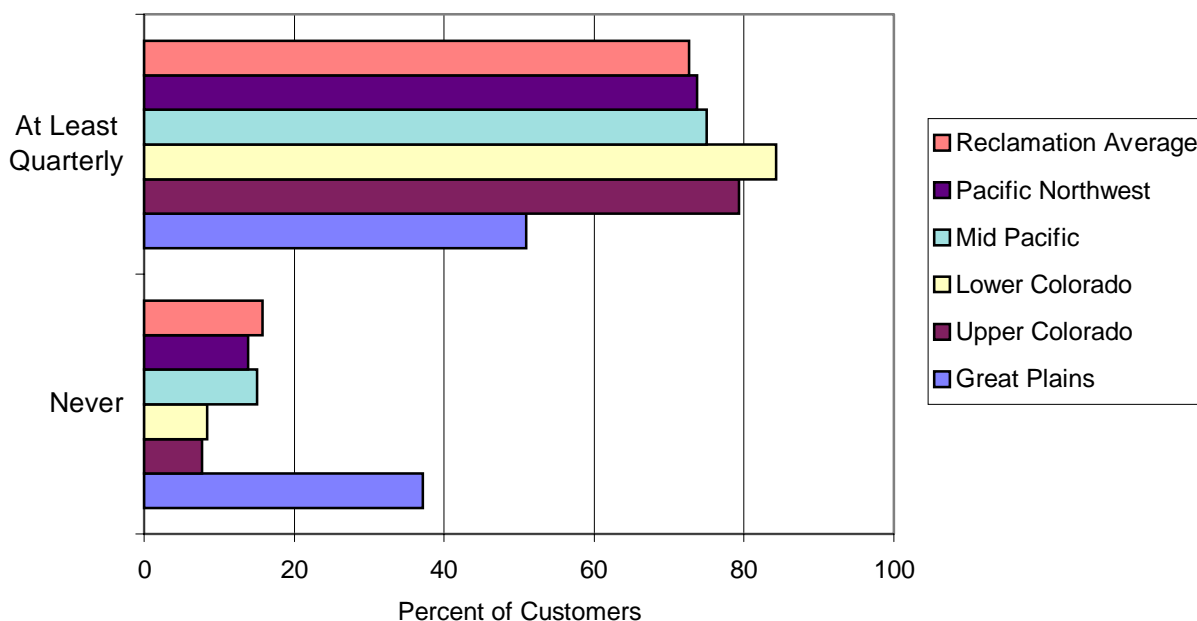


FIGURE 3.8 Frequency at Which Customers Received Information from Reclamation

Nearly 85% of the Lower Colorado customers had received information from Reclamation at least quarterly; that figure was 13 percentage points higher than Reclamation's overall percentage. Again, the Great Plains response rate varied from the overall response rate. More than 35% of the Great Plains customers had not received information from Reclamation during the past 12 months. As previously stated, WAPA is the primary contact for power customers in this region, and it provides power-related information to them.

3.3.1.3 Question 1.3 — During the past 12 months, how would you rate the Bureau of Reclamation's performance in:

Customers were asked to rate Reclamation's performance in four areas: (1) asking for my ideas, (2) listening to my ideas, (3) considering my ideas, and (4) including my ideas in decision making. A six-point Likert scale was used to categorize responses as excellent, good, fair, poor, very poor, or not applicable. Overall, customers positively assessed Reclamation performance in these areas (Figure 3.9).

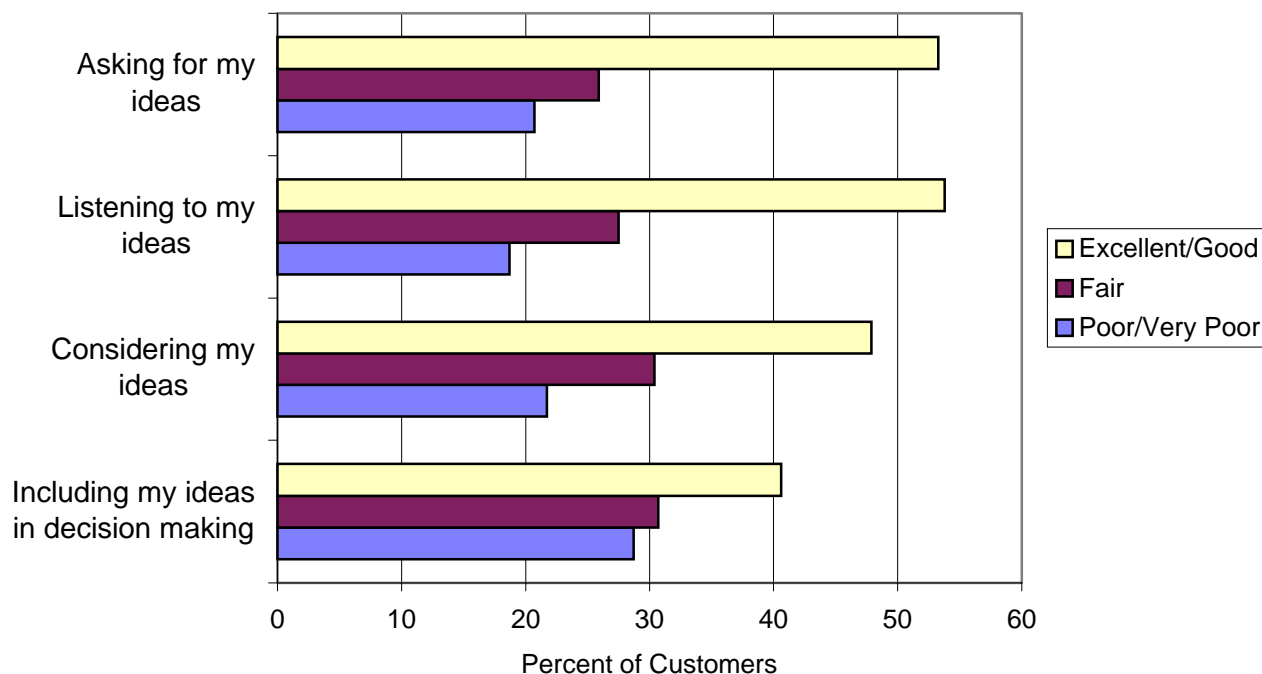


FIGURE 3.9 Customers' Opinions on How Well Reclamation Does in Asking for, Listening to, and Considering Their Ideas

More than half of the customers indicated that Reclamation does an excellent or good job asking for and listening to their ideas. Although very similar messages were conveyed from each region, some regional differences are noteworthy. First, ratings from customers in Lower Colorado were once again more positive than the Reclamationwide ratings. The Lower Colorado customers' ratings of Reclamation in the excellent or good categories were from 2 to 9 percentage points higher than the overall ratings. These ratings were accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the percentage of customers rating the measures poor or very poor. As discussed above with reference to Question 1.2, these data support the notion that greater levels of communication can help improve customers satisfaction.

Customers in the Great Plains region also rated these performance measures more positively than did the Reclamationwide customers. Ratings of excellent or good were 1 to 11 percentage points higher in the Great Plains. These results are consistent with those for Reclamationwide customers who specified electric power as the primary service they receive from Reclamation. Excellent or good ratings for the four performance measures in Question 1.3 from the customer were equal to or higher

than the values from all customers. Because the Great Plains region had a much higher representation of electric power customers than any other region, it is likely that these customers raised the Great Plains response rates so they were higher than those on a Reclamationwide basis.

The other principal differences in regional responses were that the Upper Colorado response rates for excellent or good to “including my ideas in decision making” were 7 percentage points lower than the Reclamationwide response and that the Pacific Northwest response rates of poor or very poor to all four performance measures were 4 to 7 percentage points higher than the Reclamationwide average. The Upper Colorado and Pacific Northwest regions have a much greater percentage of customers who identified agricultural water as their primary service than did the other regions. Examining the responses of all Reclamation customers who identified agricultural water as their primary service shows that these customers gave excellent or good ratings for these four performance measures that were 8 to 9 percentage points lower than those given by Reclamation as a whole. Furthermore, they had response rates for poor or very poor that were 4 to 8 percentage points higher than the overall Reclamationwide responses. These lower ratings might be related to frustrations expressed through open-ended responses indicating that some agricultural water customers felt Reclamation has abandoned its traditional customers in favor of environmental interests. The comparatively heavy percentage of agricultural water customers in the Upper Colorado and Pacific Northwest regions lowered the regional responses to this question.

3.3.1.4 Question 1.4 — Please ✓ if receiving information from the Bureau of Reclamation on the following topics is of value to you. (please ✓ all categories that apply)

Customers were asked to check whether receiving information from Reclamation on twelve topics was of value to them. The topics were: (1) Bureau of Reclamation’s mission, (2) new initiatives, (3) research and development, (4) dam operations and maintenance, (5) environment, (6) rate setting, (7) historical and archival information, (8) laws/regulation governing the Bureau of Reclamation, (9) cost accounting, (10) water, (11) power, and (12) other. The “other” category was provided so that

customers could identify topics of valuable information that were not included. More than 75% of Reclamation's customers were interested in receiving information about its water and environmental programs and new initiatives (Figure 3.10).

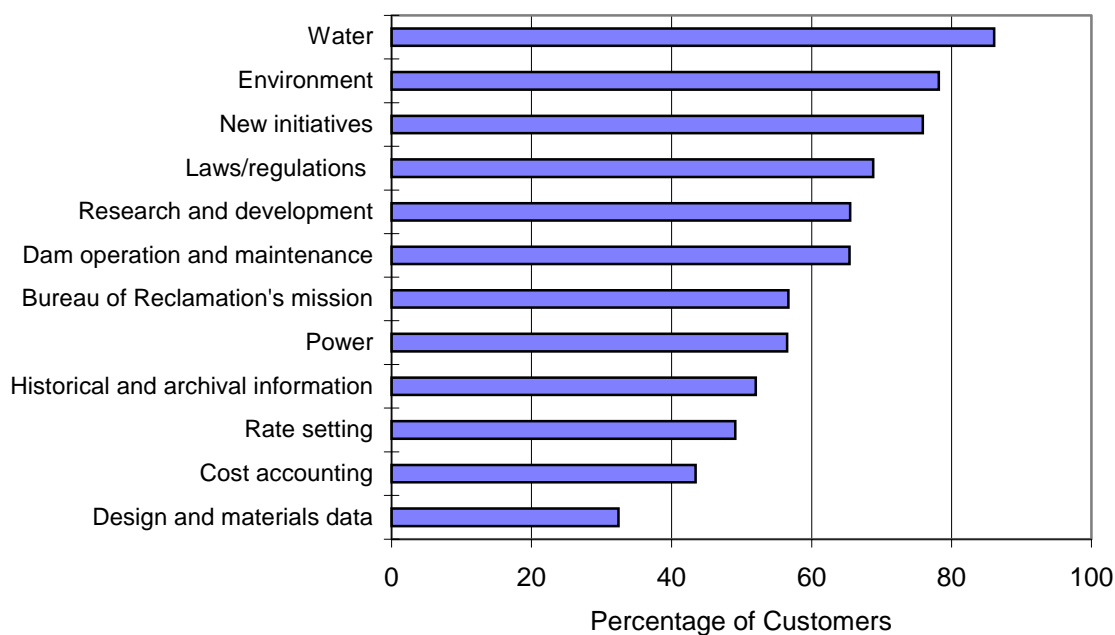


FIGURE 3.10 Types of Information of Interest to Reclamation's Customers

As indicated in Figure 3.10, the greatest percentage of customers was interested in receiving information about Reclamation's water program. This same result was found for four of the five regions (Great Plains being the exception). The customers in these same four regions had predominately identified agriculture water as being the primary service they received from Reclamation. Great Plains customers were somewhat of an anomaly in this regard, since environment was their top area of interest (it was second or third in the other four regions), water was third, and power was seventh, with only 57% of Great Plains customers stating that they would be interested in receiving information on this subject. More than 80% of the Reclamation power customers noted that they wanted to receive information on the power program from Reclamation. It might be that the power customers in the Great

Plains were interested in receiving relevant information from the PMA rather than directly from Reclamation. Reclamation's customers from the regions uniformly indicated a strong interest in receiving information about the environment (first, second, or third highest responses in each of the regions) and new initiatives (second or third highest responses in each region). There was also a uniformly strong interest in receiving information on laws/regulations affecting Reclamation, with this area being the fourth highest in four regions and sixth highest in the Pacific Northwest.

A final comment with regard to this question is that even though a particular subject may have ranked lower than other subjects, a substantial percentage of Reclamation's customers were interested in receiving information on all subjects. For example, information on rate setting was rated the 10th (out of 12) subject for which information was requested. However, almost 50% of Reclamation's customers were interested in receiving such information.

When asked to identify other topics on which they would like information from Reclamation, 9% of the respondents provided suggestions. Respondents provided two types of responses. Some wanted more details on the previously identified general topics (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA], fish facilities, river operations, and river maintenance). Others identified new topics of interest (e.g., grant funding). Several respondents requested information on specific programs or projects. The responses were categorized into the following five general areas:

- Specific programs or projects
- Water, river, and lake management
- Environment
- Recreation
- Other

Individual responses to this question are presented in Appendix D.

3.3.1.5 Question 1.5 — In what method would you like to receive information from the Bureau of Reclamation? (please ✓ all categories that apply)

Customers were asked to check whether they would like to receive information from Reclamation via six methods — postal delivery, telephone, fax, personal meetings, Internet/e-mail, and public meetings. Ninety-five percent of Reclamation's customers were interested in receiving information by postal delivery (Figure 3.11).

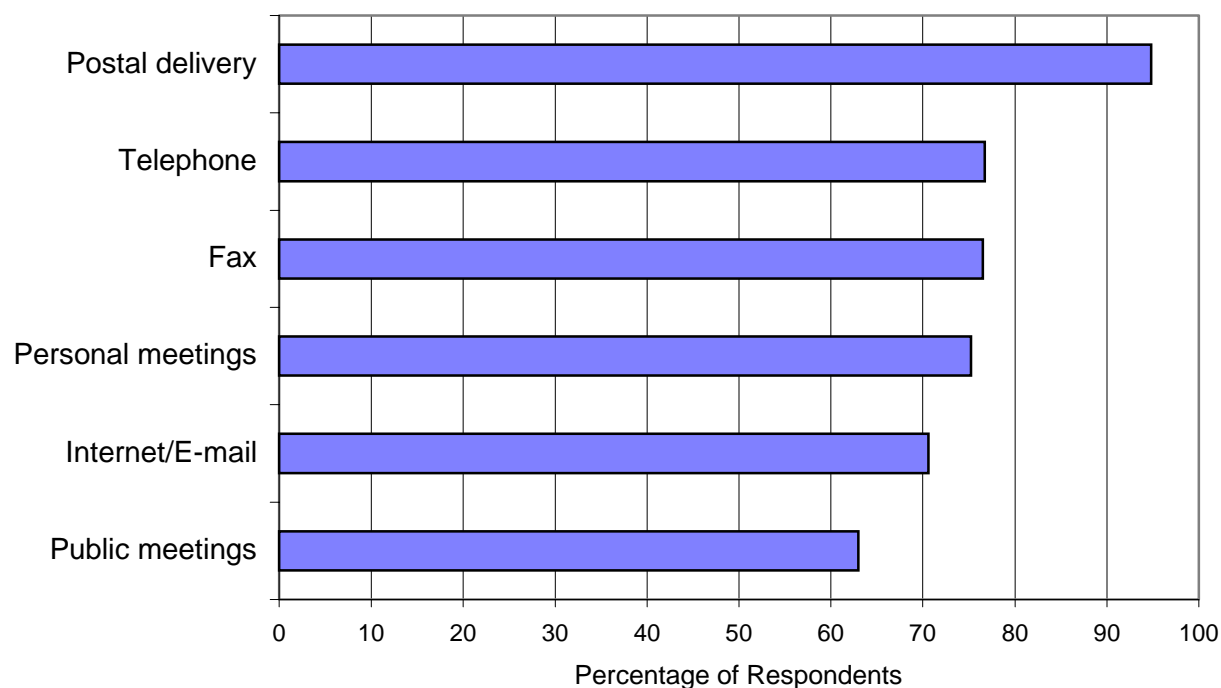


FIGURE 3.11 Methods by Which Reclamation's Customers Would Like to Receive Information

All six methods received a high positive rating, between 60% and 95% of respondents. The overall message is that customers were interested in receiving information from Reclamation by means of many different methods. Several customers provided their names, addresses, e-mail addresses, phone and work telephone numbers, and fax numbers in the hope that Reclamation would send them more information.

In each of the five regions, the highest response rate was for postal delivery, with between 91% and 97% of customers saying they would like to receive information via this method. Public meetings received the lowest response rate in each region, with between 53% and 74% of customers responding positively to this method. The responses in the Lower Colorado region ranged from a high of 97% for postal delivery to a low of 74% for public meetings. As discussed previously in this report, percentages for customers in this region were noticeably higher than percentages for customers in other regions. It thus appears that not only were Lower Colorado customers in more frequent contact with Reclamation, but a substantial fraction of them also wanted to communicate via all of the methods identified in this question.

3.3.1.6 Question 1.6 — If the Bureau of Reclamation could make one improvement in its interaction with you, what should it be?

Customers were asked to suggest one way that Reclamation could improve its interaction with customers, and 403 of them provided a comment or suggestion.

Approximately 8% of the respondents stated that they were pleased with their interactions with Reclamation, and only 2% made a negative comment without suggesting any specific improvement. Almost 23% of the respondents suggested that more could be done to ensure that customer concerns were sought, listened to, and integrated into Reclamation's policies and actions. Three specific suggestions were to (1) involve Reclamation's stakeholders more, (2) provide more personal contact with Reclamation decision makers (e.g., Reclamation staff should visit customer locations), and (3) cooperate better with other entities, particularly other government agencies and Indian nations. Approximately 6% of the respondents noted that customer interactions could be improved if there was greater consistency in Reclamation's policies and practices. The respondents also stated that often they receive different information from individual Reclamation staff members and expressed their need to receive consistent messages.

More than 30% of the respondents noted that Reclamation needs to improve its customer communication by increasing its visibility and that of its projects by providing regular, up-to-date information. Other suggestions included providing wider notification of upcoming public meetings and travel reimbursement to some participants in public meetings. More than 10% of the respondents suggested that Reclamation could improve communication with its customers by:

- Establishing a single point of contact and maintaining it throughout a project
- Publishing and distributing a point of contact directory by location and issue
- Updating customer mailing lists, and
- Improving Reclamation's Web site to provide current information about Reclamation's programs, projects, points of contact, policies, and initiatives.

Nearly 10% of the respondents noted that Reclamation should be more timely in responding to customer inquiries and concerns. An additional 3% stated that Reclamation could improve its customer interactions by returning telephone calls in a more timely manner.

Another 10% of the respondents offered suggestions for improving interactions on specific Reclamation projects or programs (e.g., water management, environmental impact studies, and recreation).

Approximately 7% of the respondents suggested improving customer interactions by reducing Reclamation's bureaucracy and providing more effective upper management support and guidance. Also, 7% suggested that greater empowerment and/or accountability of local staff would improve interactions with customers.

3.3.2 Section 2: Assessing the Bureau of Reclamation's Staff

3.3.2.1 Question 2.1 — Do you know whom to contact at the Bureau of Reclamation for assistance with your specific needs?

Customers were asked if they knew whom to contact at the Bureau of Reclamation for assistance. More than 70% of the customers knew whom to contact at Reclamation for assistance (Figure 3.12).

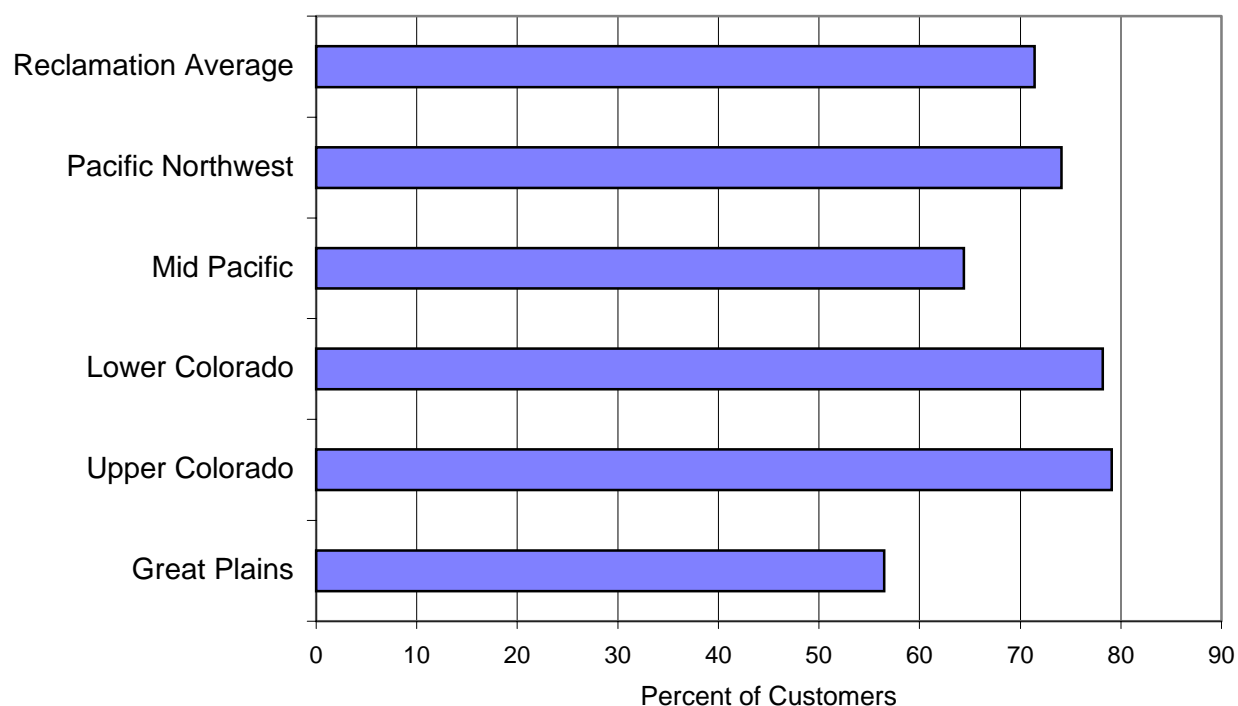


FIGURE 3.12 Reclamation Contacts Known by Customers

In contrast to the 71% of Reclamationwide customers who indicated that they knew whom in Reclamation to contact, only 56% of customers in the Great Plains region responded that they did. While there is a tendency to explain this comparatively low response by noting that power customers do not generally deal directly with Reclamation but with PMAs instead, other analyses do not support this interpretation. In particular, when power customers from all regions were examined collectively, about

69% of them indicated that they know whom to contact at Reclamation (compared with the Reclamationwide value of 71% for all customers). Thus, the low positive response rate in the Great Plains region is an anomaly that is as yet unexplained.

3.3.2.2 Question 2.2 — During the past 12 months, which level of Bureau of Reclamation office did you contact most regularly?

Customers were asked to identify which level of Reclamation (local area, regional, or commissioner) office they had contacted most regularly during the past 12 months. More than 60% of the customers dealt most regularly with their local area office (Figure 3.13).

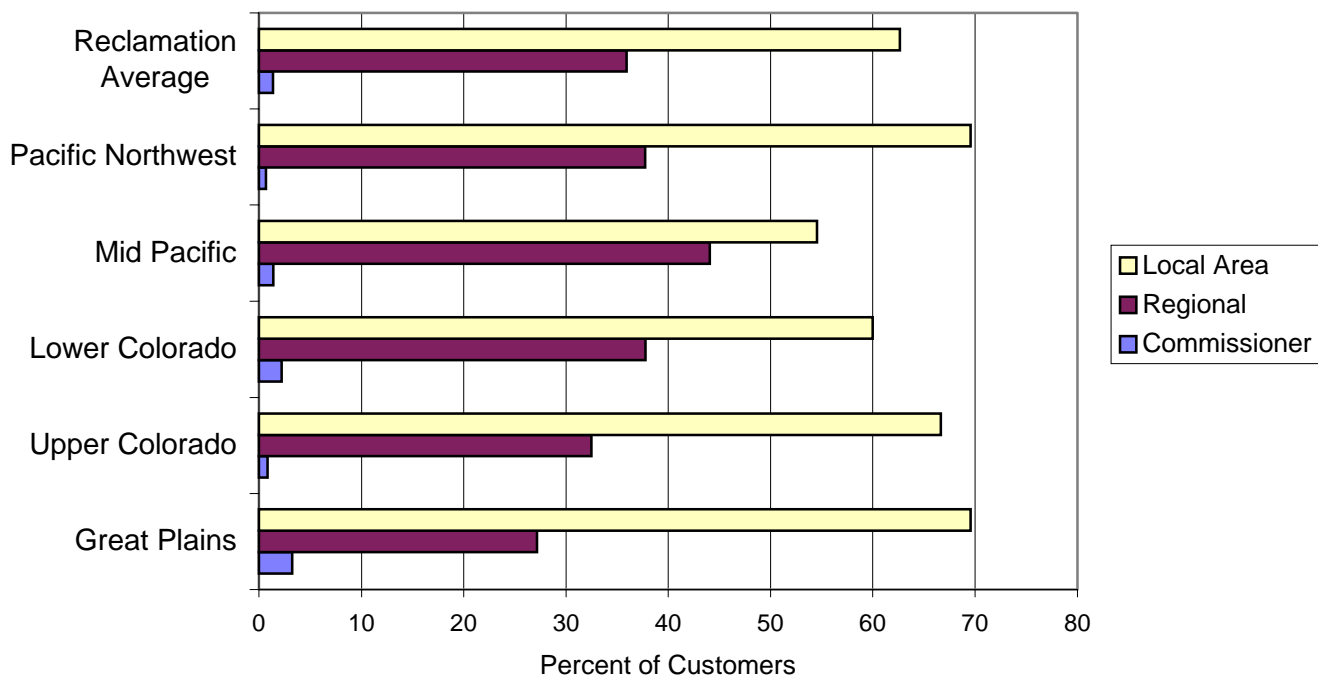


FIGURE 3.13 Percentages of Customers That Dealt Most Regularly with their Local Area Office by Region

The Great Plains and Mid Pacific region responses varied from the overall response. Great Plains customers dealt with their local area office 7 percentage points more and their regional office 9 percentage points less than the Reclamation average. Conversely, Mid Pacific customers dealt with their local area office 8 percentage points less and their regional office 8 percentage points more than the Reclamation average.

Other variances were exhibited by the environmental, power, and water customers. More than 50% of the environmental customers dealt most regularly with their regional office, a figure 14 percentage points higher than the Reclamation average. More than 50% of the power customers dealt most regularly with their local area office, a figure that was 13 percentage points lower than the Reclamation average. This information was not consistent with information for the power-based Great Plains region. Of the water customers, 70% dealt most regularly with their local area office, a figure that was 7 percentage points higher than the Reclamation average.

3.3.2.3 Question 2.3 — During the past 12 months, please ✓ the staff type you have dealt with most regularly?

Customers were asked to identify the staff types they had dealt with most regularly during the past 12 months: (1) profession and technical, (2) managerial, (3) administrative, or (4) industrial and vocational trades. Nearly half of the customers had dealt most regularly with Reclamation's professional and technical staff (Figure 3.14). There were no significant regional variations in the responses to this question. All regions had response rates within 4 percentage points of the Reclamationwide response.

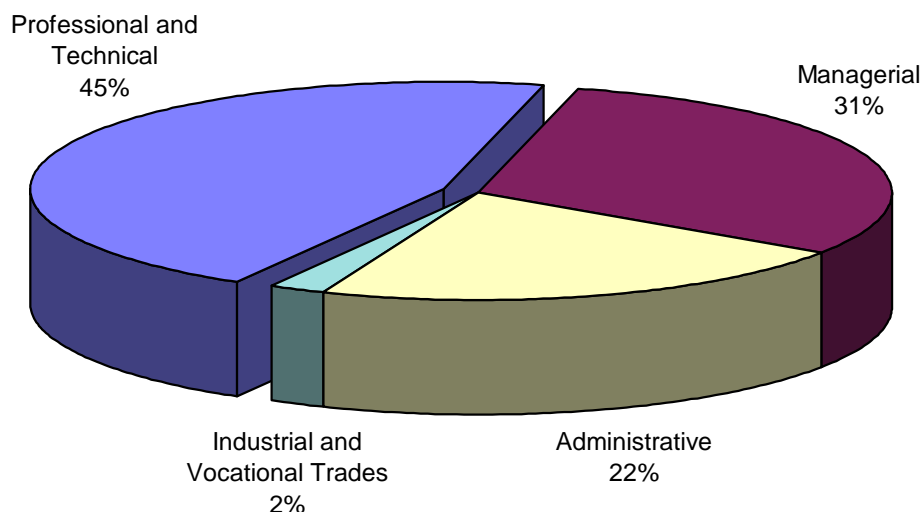


FIGURE 3.14 Types of Reclamation Staff Members That Customers Dealt with Most Regularly

The response rates of power and environmental customers varied from those of Reclamation overall. Nearly 75% of the power customers and 55% of the environmental customers dealt with Reclamation's professional and technical staff most regularly; those figures were higher than Reclamation's average by 29 and 9 percentage points, respectively.

**3.3.2.4 Question 2.4 — Please circle how you agree with the following statements...
The Bureau of Reclamation's staff are...**

Customers were asked to evaluate how often Reclamation's staff exhibited five attributes: accessible, helpful, knowledgeable, timely in their responses, and courteous/respectful. A six-point Likert scale was used to categorize responses as always, often, sometimes, rarely, never, or don't know. There was no regional or customer type variance. Between 75% and 90% of the customers rated Reclamation's staff highly, as being always or often courteous/respectful (90%), knowledgeable (80%), accessible (75%), and helpful (75%) (Figure 3.15).

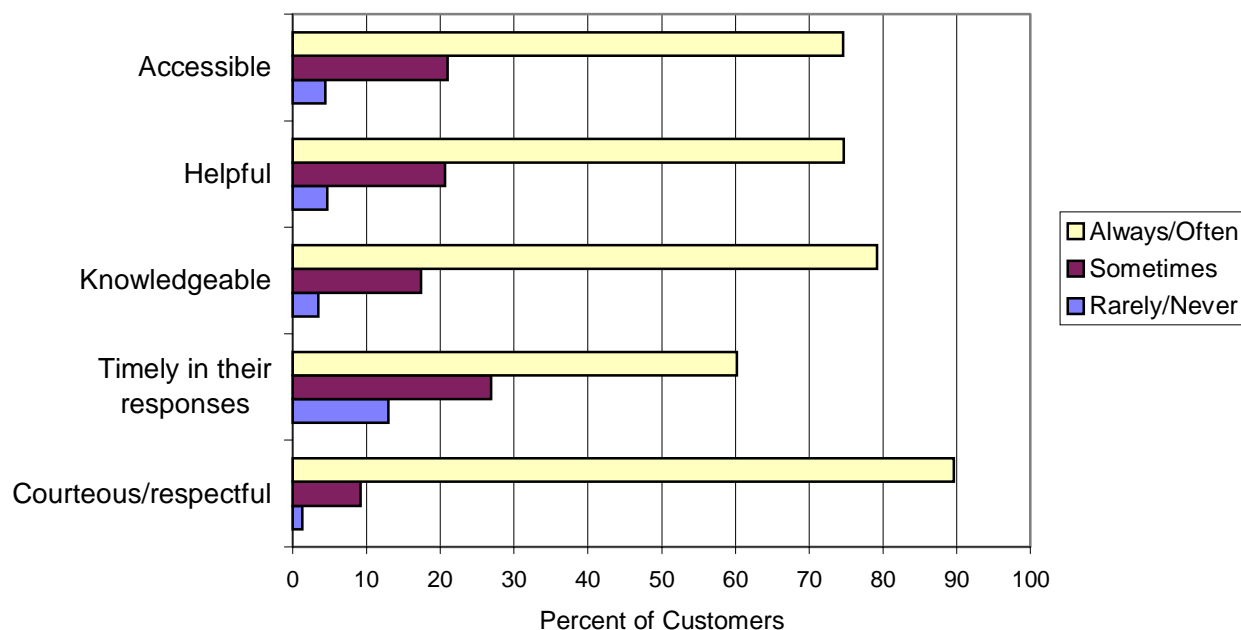


FIGURE 3.15 Customers Beliefs about the Attributes of Reclamation's Staff

However, 40% of the customers believed that Reclamation's staff is sometimes to rarely/never timely in their responses, suggesting that Reclamation needs to improve its follow-through. This area offers Reclamation an opportunity to increase its customer satisfaction by focusing more on its after-initial-contact activities.

Almost all of the responses for the individual regions were within five percentage points, plus or minus, of the Reclamationwide response for each of the four performance measures considered here. The only two exceptions occurred in the Great Plains region, where the response rates for almost always or often to "helpful" and "timely" were 82% and 67%, compared with Reclamationwide responses of 73% and 67%, respectively. The higher than average rating for the helpful performance measure was consistent with the rating from all Reclamation customers who identified power as their primary service. The higher rating for timely in the Great Plains region could not be readily attributed to the heavy influence of power customers, because the response of Reclamationwide power customers for this measure was very consistent (within two percentage points) with the response of all customers.

Also, although Lower Colorado's responses were within five percentage points of the Reclamationwide responses, it was the only one of the five regions for which the responses for each of the four performance measures was more positive than the Reclamation average. These findings provide additional support for the concept that higher levels of customer communication lead to greater customer satisfaction.

3.3.2.5 Question 2.5 — Please share any additional comments you have about staff in any of the Bureau of Reclamation's offices.

Customers were asked to provide additional comments regarding Reclamation staff, and 251 responses were submitted (Figure 3.16). All responses could be categorized as positive, negative, or mixed.

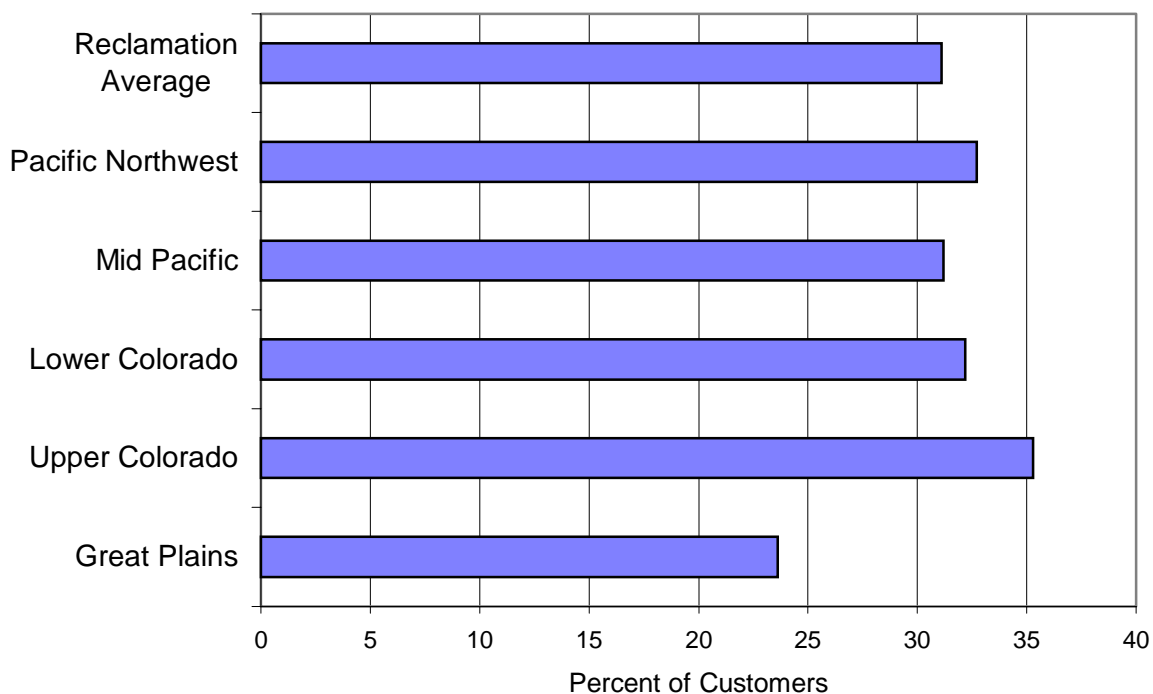


FIGURE 3.16 Percentages of Customers Who Made Additional Comments about Reclamation's Staff by Region

Approximately 58% made a positive comment about Reclamation, indicating that a specific individual, type of staff member, office, or program was good and/or easy to work with.

Approximately 8% of the respondents to this question were displeased with Reclamation's staff or indicated that a specific individual, type of staff member, office, or program was difficult to work with. Furthermore, 7% indicated that Reclamation's staff members were concerned with issues that were not important to the respondent. Another 14% commented that the staff members were not timely in their responses, inaccessible by telephone or other means, inconsistent, untruthful or evasive, not knowledgeable, arrogant, disrespectful, or rude.

Approximately 13% of the respondents to this question included statements that could be categorized as mixed, having both positive and negative aspects with regard to Reclamation's staff.

Additional thoughts mentioned in some of the responses merit discussion. For example, approximately 5% of the respondents commented that Reclamation was too political and/or bureaucratic. Some respondents stated that this political/bureaucratic atmosphere inhibited local decision making authority and accountability. Another 4% suggested that Reclamation staff were overworked and/or had low morale. Approximately 4% noted the high turnover of Reclamation's staff. These responses were consistent among regions.

3.3.2.6 Question 2.6 — What is the single most important action that the Bureau of Reclamation could take to help its staff improve customer service?

Customers were asked to suggest the single most important action that Reclamation could take to help its staff improve customer service, and 310 customers responded (Figure 3.17).

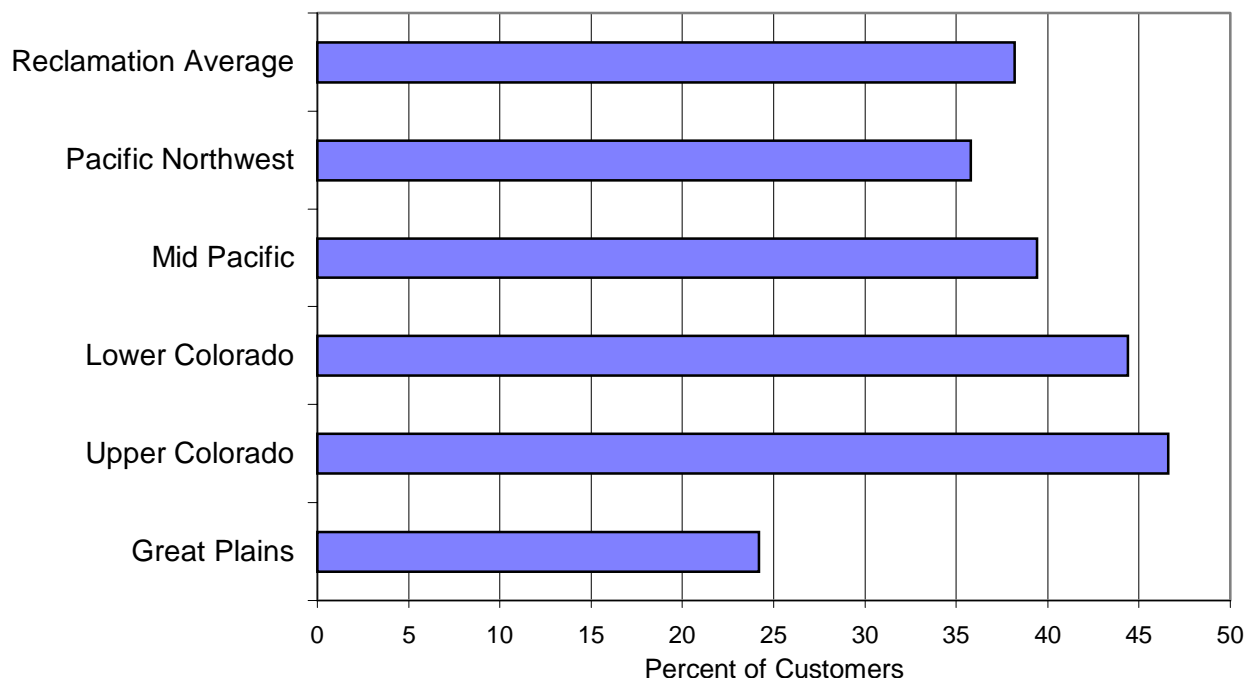


FIGURE 3.17 Percentages of Customers Who Recommended an Action for Improving Reclamation's Customer Service by Region

The responses were generally similar to those given to Question 1.6. Of the respondents, 15% noted that Reclamation staff should seek, listen to, and incorporate customer thoughts and concerns into Reclamation actions. Approximately 11% suggested that customer service could be improved through better communication (e.g., improved meetings, regular publication of Reclamation actions and plans). Ten percent of respondents stated that customer service could be improved if responses from Reclamation staff members were more timely, which included returning telephone calls promptly. Eight percent stated that customer service could be improved through the designation of a single point of contact and/or the publication of directories listing appropriate points of contact.

Approximately 9% of the respondents noted that customer service could be improved by increased adherence to Reclamation's mission. Of these responses, two-thirds suggested that Reclamation adhere to its historical mission, which was principally to provide irrigation water and electric power. The other third suggested that Reclamation adhere more closely to its modern mission, which also includes recreation and environmental protection.

Five percent of respondents suggested that Reclamation is too bureaucratic and that customer service could be improved by reducing the level of bureaucracy within the agency. A similar thought was expressed by an additional 8% of the respondents who suggested that greater empowerment (and accountability) of local staff would improve customer service.

Hiring knowledgeable staff and training existing staff were cited by approximately 8% of the respondents as ways to improve customer service. Approximately 5% of the respondents suggested that Reclamation emulate the private sector in dealing with customers. Although respondents did not elaborate on private sector actions Reclamation could take, other responses to this survey and other governmental surveys indicated that actions might include establishing customer service departments, providing better cost accounting, and being more available during nontraditional hours, among others (Gore 1995; Clinton and Gore 1997).

3.3.3 Section 3: Evaluating the Bureau of Reclamation's Performance

3.3.3.1 Question 3.1 — Please rate the Bureau of Reclamation's performance in the following programs and initiatives.

Customers were asked to rate fourteen of Reclamation's programs and initiatives as excellent, good, fair, poor, very poor, or don't know. An "other" category was added for customers to rate a program or initiative that was not listed. The programs and initiatives customers rated were as follows:

- Cultural and archeological resources,
- Dam safety,
- Endangered species restoration,
- Environment,
- Hydropower generation,
- Facilities operations and maintenance
- Native American affairs,
- Public safety,
- Research,
- Resources management,
- Water conservation,
- Water reuse and treatment, and
- Water supply

Figure 3.18 shows the mean ratings for each of these programs and initiatives as revealed by the Reclamationwide responses. All of the programs and initiatives identified received mean scores that fell at least in the fair to good range (mean scores of between 3 and 4), and the dam safety, hydropower generation, and public safety programs received mean scores of 4, which is equivalent to a good rating. Although there were some differences in the relative ratings of the programs and initiatives among the five regions, the mean scores within each region for each program and initiative generally fell in the same fair to good range, with a few receiving mean scores of 4 or slightly higher.

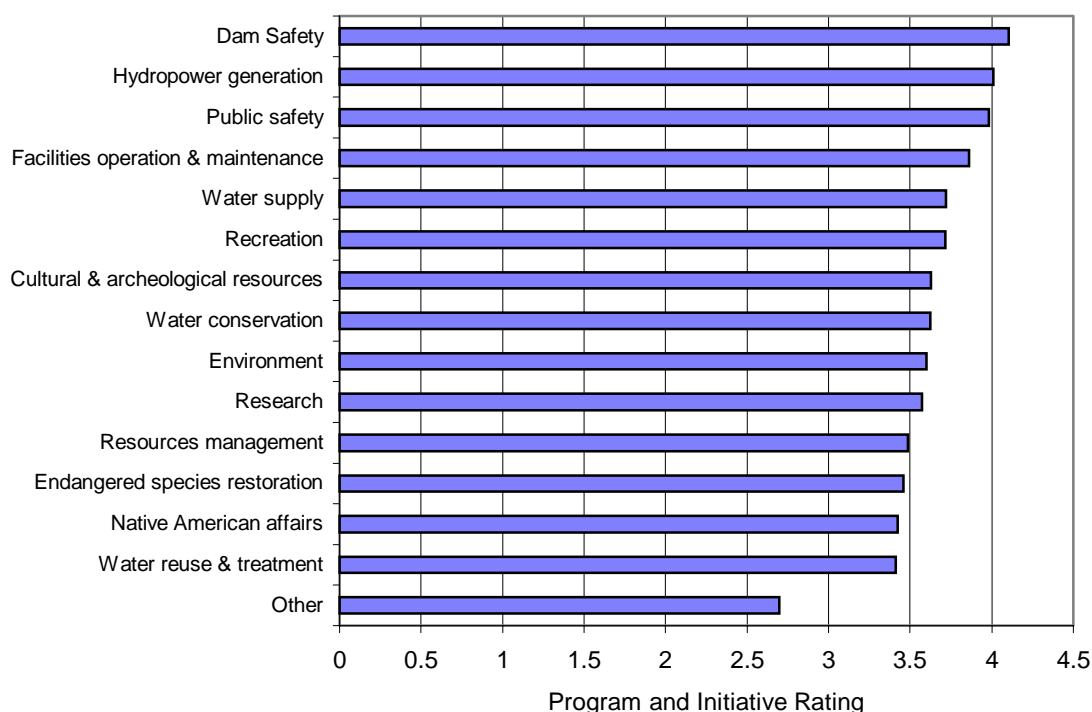


FIGURE 3.18 Customer Ratings of Reclamation's Performance in its Programs

The largest differences between the Reclamationwide score for a particular program or initiative and a regionally based score occurred in the Lower Colorado region, where the water reuse and treatment program received a mean score of 3.9, compared with the Reclamationwide mean of 3.4, and the recreation program received a mean score of 3.2, compared to the Reclamationwide score of 3.7

For each program and initiative identified, the mean scores from the Great Plains region were slightly (from 0.1 to 0.3 point) higher than the Reclamationwide mean scores for the same programs and initiatives. In the Mid Pacific region, the mean scores for each program and initiative were slightly lower (from zero to 0.4 point) than the Reclamationwide values. A partial explanation relates to the comparative percentages of customers who identified “environment” as being the primary service they received from Reclamation. The percentage of environment customers in the Great Plains region was 9%; the Reclamationwide value was 17%. Environment customers represent 25% of the respondents from the Mid Pacific region. An examination of the responses to Question 3.1 from environment customers shows that they had mean scores that were generally equal to or lower than the Reclamationwide scores. The comparatively low percentage of environment customers in the Great Plains region would thus tend to raise the scores, while the high percentage of environment customers in the Mid Pacific region would tend to lower the scores.

For all programs and initiatives in all other regions, the mean scores varied less than 0.3 point plus or minus from the Reclamationwide scores. No trends other than those previously noted were apparent, except for the “other” category discussed below.

Only 46 (6%) respondents specified and rated an “other” program or initiative that was not listed. Respondents identified 22 programs or initiatives (Appendix D). The “other” category received the lowest mean score of 2.7, thereby falling in the poor to fair range. The single largest program area identified by 28% of the respondents was “water.” Water included items such as management, quality, nonproject storage, supply, transfer, water rights, agricultural interests, irrigation, and the AGRIMET database. The second largest category, identified by 11% of the respondents, was “coordination/cooperation.” Coordination/cooperation included items such as grants, cooperative projects, intergovernmental agreements, and coordination between agencies. Another 7% of the respondents identified specific Reclamation projects such as Colorado River salinity, Columbia Basin Project, and the Yuma Desalinization Plant. The remaining nineteen categories received only one or two comments each.

3.3.3.2 Question 3.2 — Which program or initiative listed above is the most valuable to you?

Customers were asked to examine the fourteen programs or initiatives listed in Question 3.1 and list which one they deemed most valuable. Nearly one-quarter of the customers listed the top three programs or initiatives most valuable to them. Nearly 40% of the respondents identified water supply as the most valuable (Figure 3.19).

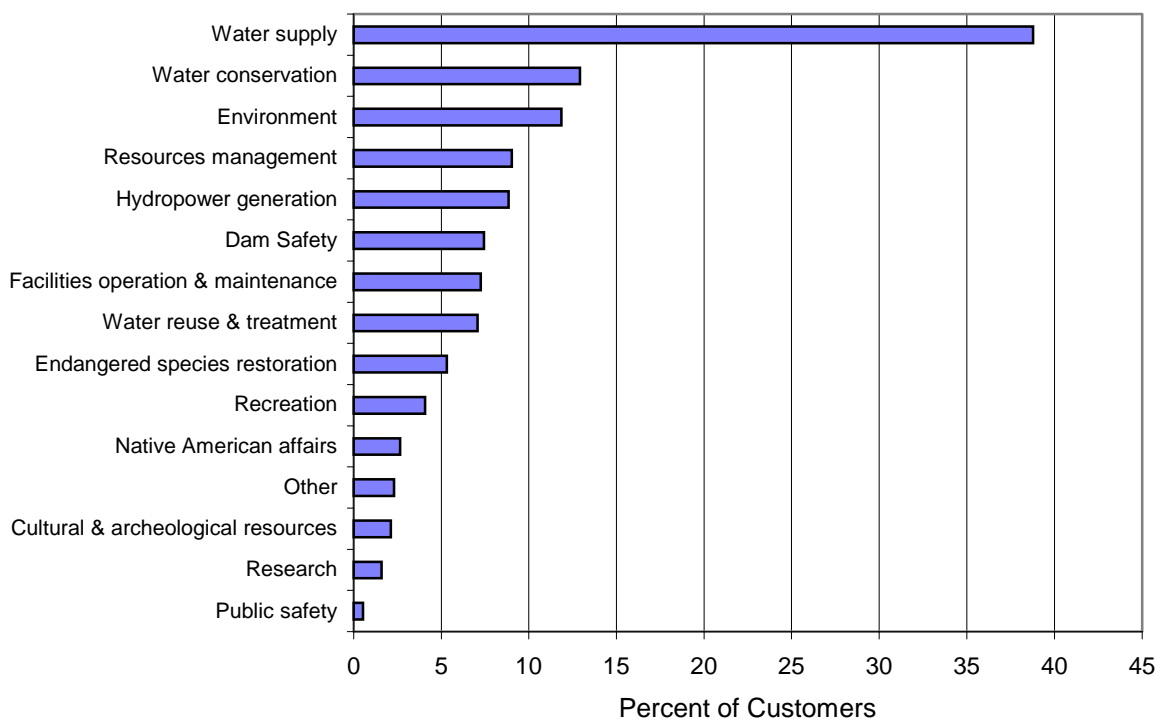


FIGURE 3.19 Value of Reclamation Programs to Customers

Great Plains customers differed in their assessments of the most valuable programs, identifying hydropower significantly more often (28%) and water supply significantly less often (24%) as the most valuable program than the Reclamation averages of 9% and 40%, respectively, for these attributes. Mid Pacific customers ranked environment as the most valuable program at a noticeably higher rate (20%) than the Reclamationwide figure of 12%. Pacific Northwest and Great Plains rated environment as the most valuable program at much lower percentages (6% and 7%, respectively) than the overall rankings.

All other assessments of Reclamation's most valuable programs varied only slightly from the Reclamationwide numbers (Figure 3.20).

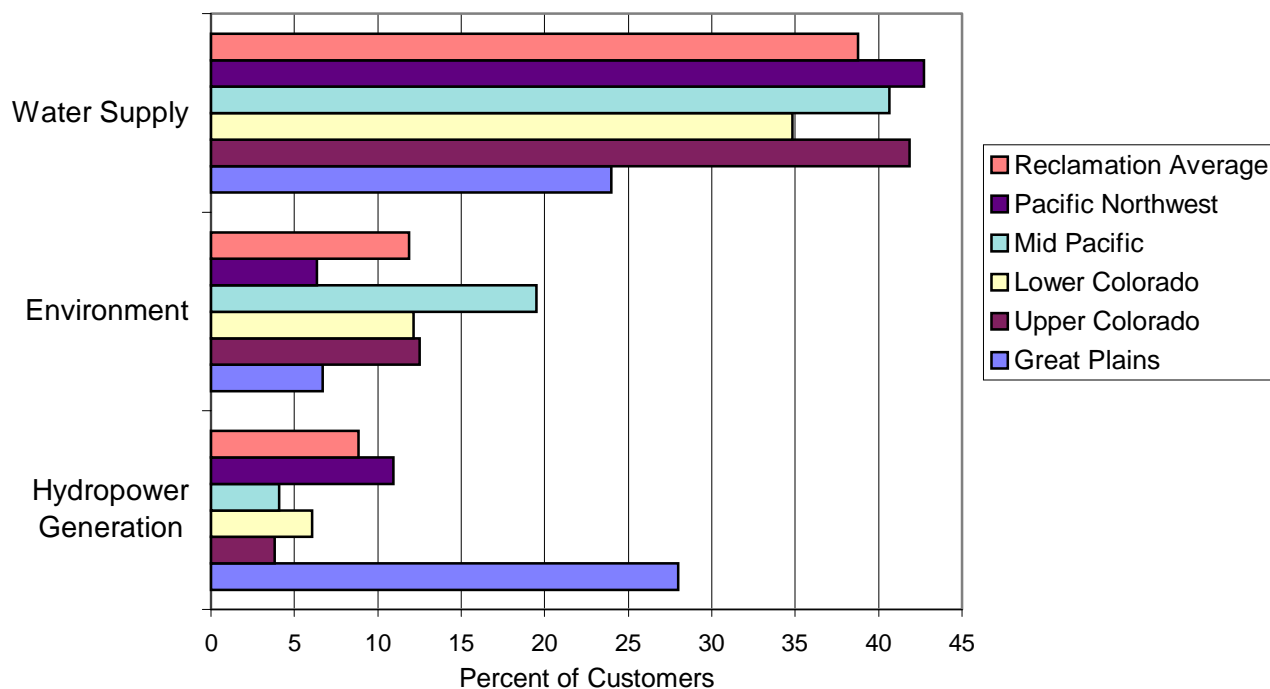


FIGURE 3.20 Regional Variation for Reclamation's Three Most Valuable Programs to Customers

When this question is broken down by customer type, the results are not surprising. Power customers identify power as the most valuable program. Water customers identify water supply as the most valuable program. Environmental customers identify the environment as the most valuable program. Recreational customers identify recreation as the most valuable program.

3.3.4 Section 4: Your Ideas

3.3.4.1 Question 4.1 — Please provide any additional thoughts and/or comments you would like to share about the Bureau of Reclamation.

Customers were asked to provide additional thoughts or comments regarding Reclamation, and 231 comments were received. The categories of comments are displayed in Figure 3.19.

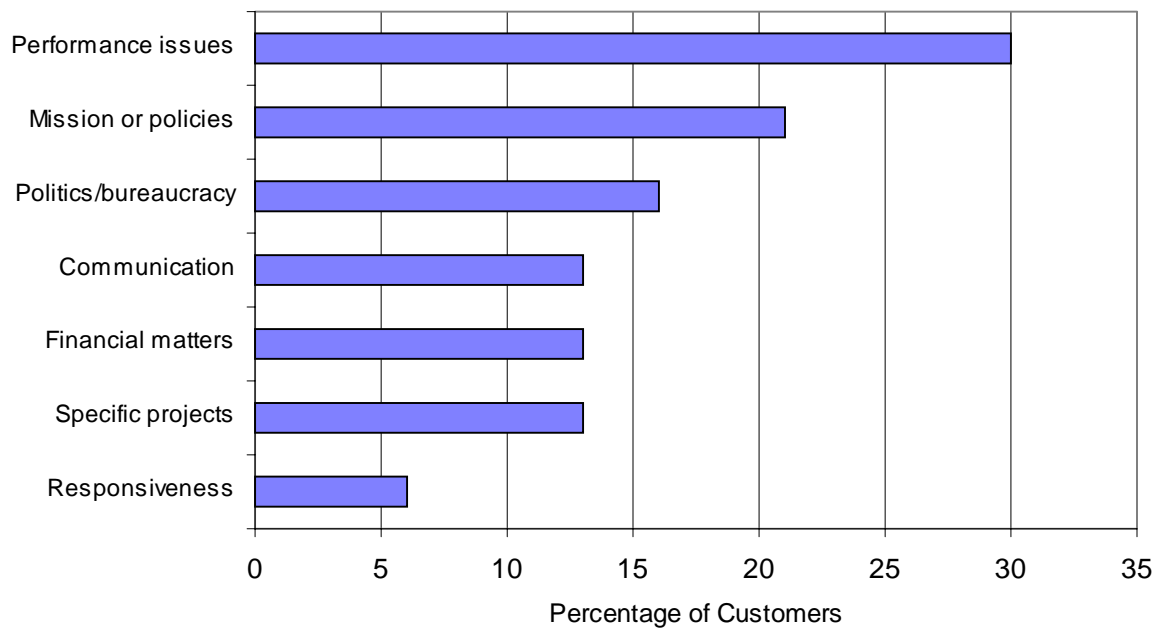


FIGURE 3.21 Categories of Additional Comments

The largest category of responses (30%) concerned perceptions of Reclamation's overall performance. Twenty-one percent of the comments to Question 4.1 regarded positive assessments of Reclamation's staff or overall performance (e.g., "You're doing a great job.") Three percent were generally negative to Reclamation's staff or to the agency's overall performance. Six percent of the responses suggested that Reclamation is not capable of performing its mandated functions or has already completed them. These respondents stated that Reclamation should therefore disband, and its remaining responsibilities should be assigned to other federal, state, or local agencies.

Approximately 25% of the responses addressed Reclamation's mission or policies. While the majority of these comments supported the traditional mission of irrigation and power production, many comments supported Reclamation's new mission. Many commenters thought that Reclamation's policies were ill defined and inconsistent and mentioned that they were unsure about Reclamation's priorities and what it is attempting to accomplish.

Sixteen percent of the respondents noted that Reclamation is too political, bureaucratic, and centralized, with inconsistent policies and actions. Some suggested that greater empowerment of local officials might help alleviate some of these problems.

Thirteen percent of the responses dealt with specific projects or operational actions. These comments were principally concerned with finishing a particular project.

Approximately 13% of the responses dealt with financial matters. Some respondents suggested that Reclamation obtain additional federal funding. The majority noted that Reclamation's accounting practices and reporting methods were not easy for them to understand.

Thirteen percent of the respondents commented that Reclamation should improve communications with its customers. Regular publication of Reclamation's actions and plans was one theme suggested to improve communication. Increased and improved use of the Internet was also suggested for improving customer communication.

Approximately 6% of the respondents indicated that Reclamation should be much more responsive in meeting customer requests and needs and in completing actions. Others specifically noted Reclamation's nonresponsiveness with regard to returning telephone calls to customers. Approximately 5% of respondents noted that Reclamation should do a better job in seeking customer input and acting upon it.